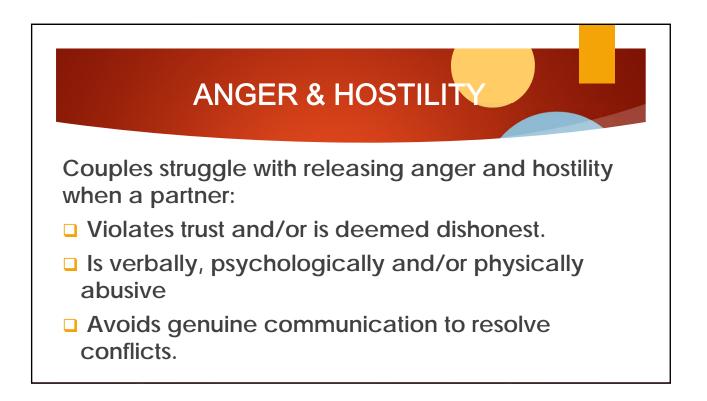




THE MARRIAGE COVENANT

The marriage is a God ordained institution in which a husband and wife bonds together in a committed relationship for life. "Their commitment to each other is an act of the heart. Therefore, conflict prevention and resolution procedures must also become an act of the heart" (Cloke, 2015).



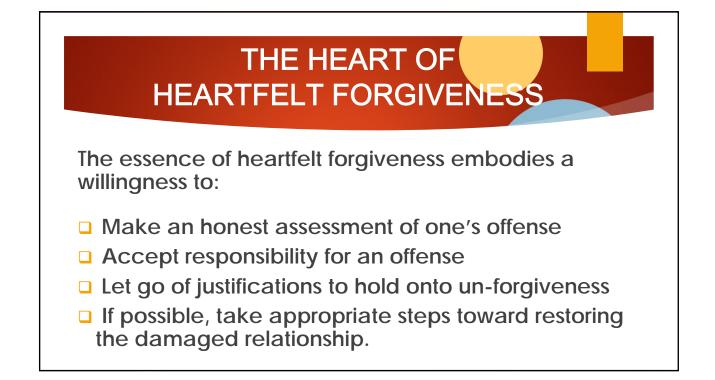
THE HEART IN HEARTFELT FORGIVENESS

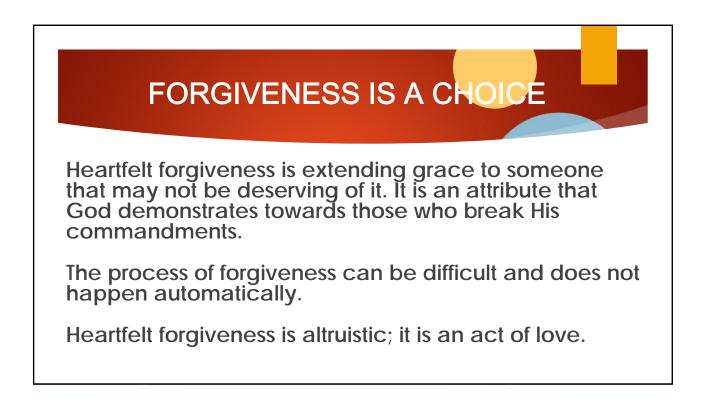
Heartfelt forgiveness is not a casual, 'forgive me' uttered to the offended partner. Such an appeal may be perceived as an inaccurate assessment of the severity of the offense and may further delay forgiveness and the reconciliation process.

THE ESSENCE OF HEARTFELT FORGIVENESS

"So also My Heavenly Father will deal with every one of you if you do not freely forgive your brother <u>from</u> <u>your heart</u>, his offenses" (Matthew 18:35, AMP).

McMinn (2011) states, "When we remove the religious context and think of forgiveness only as a clinical technique, we risk losing the <u>essence of forgiveness</u>."





ALL OFFENSES CAN BE FORGIVEN

All offenses can be forgiven because heartfelt forgiveness is a deliberate and intentional choice (Legaree, Turner, & Lollis, 2007).

The choice to forgive is independent of the kind or type of offense committed. (Luke 23:34, NKJV)

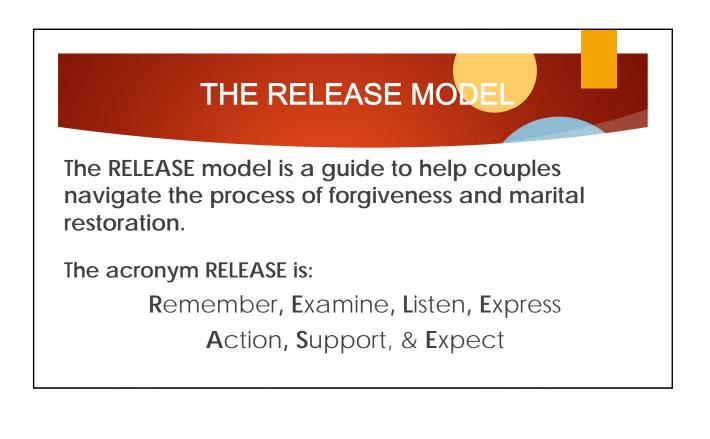
JUSTIFICATIONS AND REASONS

Heartfelt forgiveness is foundational for the healing and restoration of a damaged relationship (Sheldon, Gilchrist-Petty, & Lessley, 2014).

Hill (2001) posits that, "forgiving is an essential element in human relationships regardless of the circumstances and it is considered as one of the most critical processes of restoring relationships and emotional wellbeing."

FORGIVENESS IN THERAPY

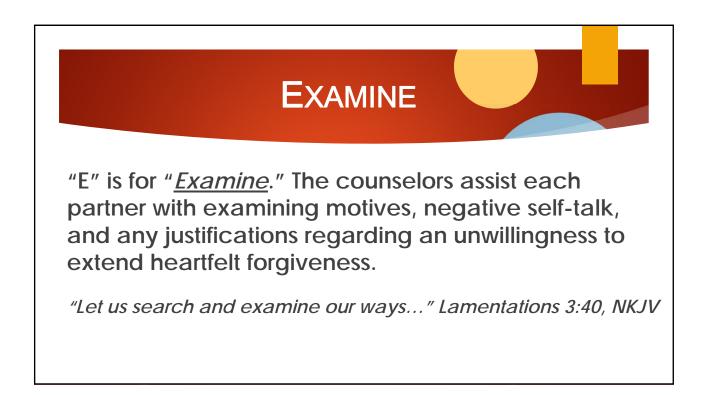
"It may be that some clinicians are uncomfortable with incorporating forgiveness in therapy because they associate it with the realm of religion and spirituality rather than recognizing it as a central aspect of healing for many clients. Forgiveness is a human phenomenon that is relevant for religious and non-religious clients alike" (Legaree et al., 2007; Weeks et al., 2003).



REMEMBER

"R" is for "<u>Remember</u>." The therapist encourage the couple to remember their *commitment* to love one another in sickness and health, wealth and poverty, in good times and bad times.

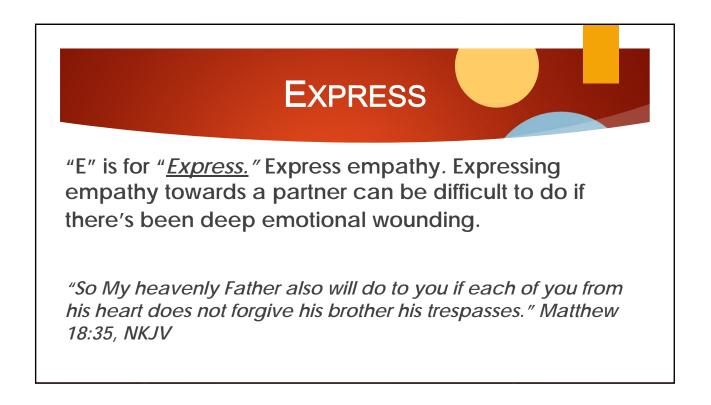
"For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife..." Ephesians 5:31, NKJV



LISTEN

"L" is for "*Listen*." Usually, when a partner is wrong and won't admit it, his/her 'pride' can make it difficult to listen to the truth. The counselor might teach the couple assertiveness, validation and conflict resolution skills.

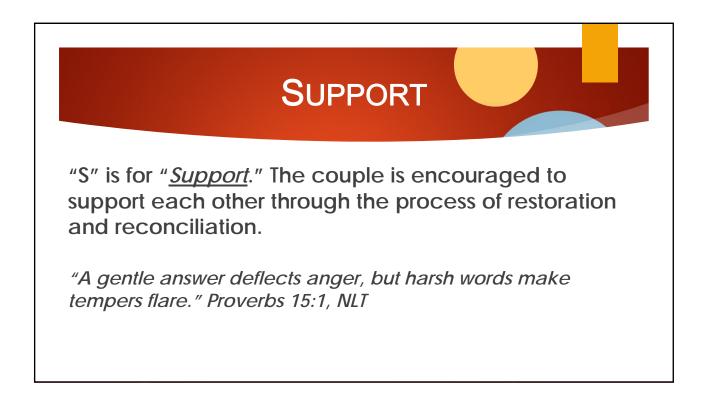
"When pride comes, then comes shame..." Proverbs 11:2, NKJV

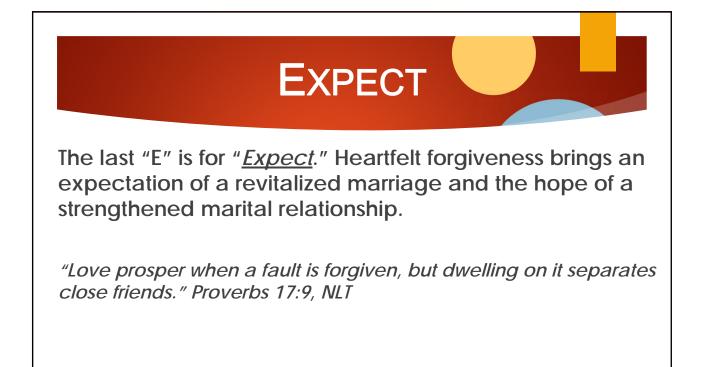


ACTION

"A" is for "<u>Action</u>." The counselor assist the couple with establishing a *plan of action* to resolve their conflict. Both partners should give input when establishing the plan as this helps to solidify their commitment to work together through the conflict.

"A man's heart plans his way, but the Lord directs his steps." Proverbs 16:9, NKJV







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